

*the*  
**HANDBOOK!**

OF  
**VIRGINIA**  
**BOATING LAWS AND**  
**RESPONSIBILITIES**



2001 Edition

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# the HANDBOOK!

## of VIRGINIA BOATING LAWS and RESPONSIBILITIES

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## Where to Find Additional Information

This handbook is designed to be a guide to Virginia's boating laws for recreational boaters who operate PWC and powerboats under 26 feet in length. The publication *BOAT VIRGINIA--A Course on Responsible Boating* gives additional information on safe boat handling and practices for recreational boaters.

- ◆ For more advanced information, see:
  - U. S. Coast Guard's *Navigation Rules*
  - Chapman Piloting Seamanship and Small Boat Handling by Elbert S. Maloney
  - The Annapolis Book of Seamanship by Mark Smith and John Rousmaniere.
- ◆ For more information and to stay abreast of new boating laws go to:

[www.dgif.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us)

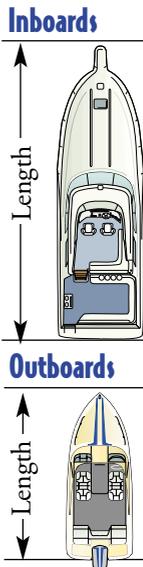
## Before Going Out on Your Boat or PWC

# Boating BASICS

Before going out on the water, take steps to make the outing safe and enjoyable.

### Boat Length Classes

- ◆ A boat's length class dictates the equipment necessary to comply with federal and state laws.
- ◆ Boats are divided into four length classes:
  - Less than 16 feet
  - 16 feet to less than 26 feet
  - 26 feet to less than 40 feet
  - 40 feet to 65 feet.
- ◆ Length is measured from the tip of the bow in a straight line to the stern. This does not include outboard motors, brackets, rudders, bow attachments, or swim platforms and ladders not a molded part of the hull.



### Boat Capacity

- ◆ Always check the capacity plate usually near the operator's position or on the boat's transom. This plate indicates the maximum weight capacity or maximum number of people that the boat can safely carry.
- ◆ PWC do not have a capacity plate. Always follow the recommended capacity in the owner's manual and on the manufacturer's warning decal.

### Fueling a Boat or PWC

Here are some safe fueling procedures to follow:

- ◆ Check the entire fuel system for leaks. Tighten connections frequently. Engine vibration can loosen them.

- ◆ Turn off all engines and electrical equipment; shut off all fuel valves; close all windows, doors and openings.
- ◆ Try to fuel in daylight. If light is required, use a flashlight or a light that is spark-proof.
- ◆ Never smoke or strike a match while fueling or when near a fueling dock.
- ◆ When filling a tank or gas can, follow these guidelines:
  - Remove portable tanks from the boat.
  - Touch the fuel pipe or tank with the spout to prevent buildup of static electricity.
  - Never fill a tank to the brim. Leave room for gas to expand. After fueling, put the fill cap on tightly to prevent vapors from escaping.
  - Immediately wipe up any spilled gas. Air out the rag after using it. Never throw it in the boat or the water.
  - Store gas onboard in a safety-approved storage tank, away from the engine in an area of good ventilation.

#### The most important safe fueling practice...

If your boat is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least 4 minutes after fueling, prior to starting your engine to remove gas vapors.

- ◆ Some additional safety procedures for PWC are:
  - Avoid spills when fueling in or near the water.
  - After fueling, open the door of the engine compartment and sniff to check for any evidence of gas fumes. Do this before starting the engine. If you do smell gas fumes, determine the source and make repairs immediately.
  - Do not tip the PWC to "fill all the way up." The tank provides for fuel expansion; if tank is over-filled, gasoline may expand and spill into the water.

## On the Water With Your Boat or PWC

Safe navigation on Virginia waterways is the responsibility of everyone. Those operating power-driven boats, sailboats, and PWC are all equally responsible for taking action to avoid collisions.

### Encountering Other Boats

Even though no boat has the “right-of-way” over another boat, there are some rules that every operator should follow when encountering other boats or PWC. It is the responsibility of both operators to take action to avoid a collision. The next page shows what to do when you encounter another boat or PWC.

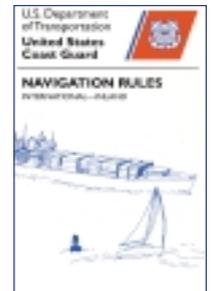
#### To prevent collisions, every operator should follow the three basic rules of navigation:

- ◆ Practice good seamanship.
- ◆ Keep a sharp lookout.
- ◆ Maintain a safe speed.

### Additional Rules

The navigation rules summarized and discussed in this handbook cover the most common situations for the recreational boater. A more complete set of rules can be found in the U. S. Coast Guard’s publication, *Navigation Rules* which can be obtained by writing to:

Superintendent of Documents  
U. S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, D.C. 20402



Or you can download the rules from the Internet at:  
[www.uscg.mil/vtm/pages/rules.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/vtm/pages/rules.htm).

## Filing a Float Plan

Before going out on a boat it is always a good idea to leave a float plan with a local marina, relative or friend. A float plan should:

- ◆ Describe the boat, its number, size, make, capacity, horsepower, and type of engine.
- ◆ List where you are going, the route, and your expected return time.
- ◆ Give the number of passengers, their names and addresses, and a contact in case of an emergency.

### Pre-Departure Checklist

You can assure a good time while operating your boat or PWC by performing this pre-departure check.

- ✓ Leave your float plan with a responsible person.
- ✓ Make sure that the steering and throttle controls operate properly and all lights are working properly.
- ✓ Check for any fuel leaks from the tank, fuel lines, and carburetor.
- ✓ Check the engine compartment for oil leaks.
- ✓ Check hose connections for leaks or cracks and make sure hose clamps are tight.
- ✓ Drain all water from the engine compartment and be sure the bilge plug is replaced and secure.
- ✓ Check to be sure the fire extinguisher is fully charged.
- ✓ Make sure that the stop button works on a PWC.
- ✓ Make sure the ignition safety switch and wrist lanyard are in working order.
- ✓ Make sure you have the required number of personal flotation devices (PFDs) and they are in good condition.

## Navigation Rules

There are two terms that help explain these rules:

**Stand-on boat** The boat or PWC which should maintain its course and speed

**Give-way boat** The boat or PWC which must take early and substantial action to avoid collision by stopping, slowing down or changing course



### Meeting Head-On

**Power vs. Power:** Neither boat is the stand-on boat. Both boats should keep to the starboard (right).

**Power vs. Sail:** The powerboat is the give-way boat. The sailboat is the stand-on boat.

### Power vs. Power

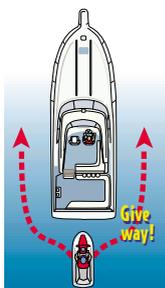


### Crossing Situations

**Power vs. Power:** The boat on the port (left) is the give-way boat. The boat on the starboard (right) is the stand-on boat.

**Power vs. Sail:** The powerboat is the give-way boat. The sailboat is the stand-on boat.

### Power vs. Power

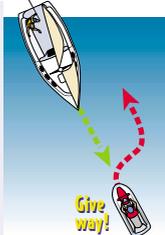


### Overtaking

**Power vs. Power:** The boat which is overtaking another boat is the give-way boat. The boat being overtaken is the stand-on boat.

**Power vs. Sail:** The boat which is overtaking another boat is the give-way boat. The boat being overtaken is the stand-on boat.

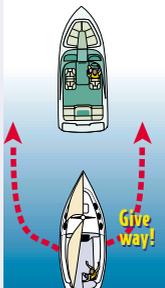
### Power vs. Power



### Power vs. Sail



### Power vs. Sail



### Power vs. Sail

## Encountering Boats With Limited Maneuverability

- ◆ If operating a power-driven boat, you must give way to:
  - Any boat not under command, such as an anchored or a disabled boat
  - Any boat restricted in its ability to maneuver, such as a boat towing or laying cable or a boat constrained by its draft such as a large ship in a channel
  - A boat engaged in commercial fishing
  - A sailboat under sail unless it is overtaking.
- ◆ If operating a boat under sail, you must give way to:
  - Any boat not under command
  - Any boat restricted in its ability to maneuver
  - A boat engaged in commercial fishing.

## Operating in Narrow Channels

- ◆ A boat in a narrow channel must keep as far to the right of the channel as is safe and practical.
- ◆ If you are operating a power-driven boat or PWC heading upstream (against the direction of the current) on Mississippi River system, then all boats coming toward you from the opposite direction have the right-of-way and you must give way.
- ◆ If operating a boat less than 20 meters (65.6 ft.) in length, a boat under sail or engaged in fishing, or a boat crossing the channel, you may not get in the way of boats that can only navigate within the channel (such as a tugboat or a large ship).
- ◆ You must not anchor in a narrow channel.
- ◆ You must use the appropriate sound signals and use caution while operating in a narrow channel when:
  - Overtaking or being overtaken
  - When your view is obstructed such as when you approach a bend in the channel.
- ◆ If you are leaving a dock, slip or tie-up mooring, you must give way to all approaching vessels.

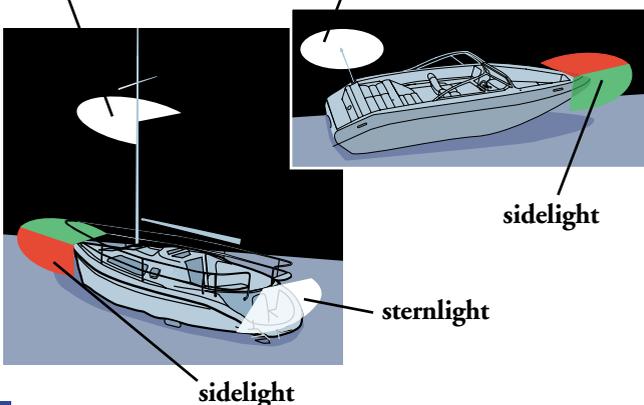
## Night Time Navigation

You should always be on the lookout for the lights of other boats when boating at night. Several types of lights serve as navigational aids at night. They are:

- ◆ **Sidelights** These red and green lights are called sidelights (or combination lights) because they are visible to another boat approaching from the side or head-on. The red light indicates a boat's port (left) side; the green indicates a boat's starboard (right) side.
- ◆ **Sternlight** A white light seen from behind the boat.
- ◆ **Masthead Light** A white light, which shines forward, located on the mast of a sailboat and required on all powerboats. A masthead light must be used by all boats when under engine power. The absence of this light identifies a sailboat under sail.
- ◆ **All-Round White Light** On powerboats less than 39.4 feet in length, this light may be used to combine a masthead and stern light into a single white light able to be seen by other boats from any direction. When sidelights are extinguished, this light serves as an anchor light.

masthead light

all-round white light



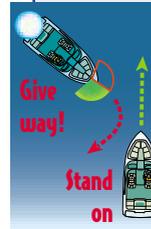
sidelight

sternlight

sidelight

## Encountering Boats at Night

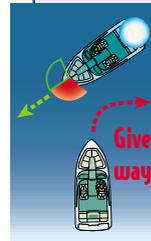
When you see a white and a green light you are the stand-on boat. However, remain alert in case the other boat operator does not see you or does not know the navigational rules.



When you see only a white light, you are overtaking another boat. It is the stand-on boat whether it is underway or anchored. You may go around it on either side.

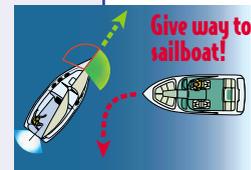
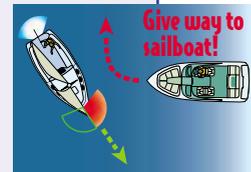


When you see a red and a white light you must give-way to the other boat! Slow down and allow the boat to pass or pass to the right behind the boat.



## Encountering a Sailboat at Night

When you see **only a green or only a red light** you are approaching a sailboat under sail and you must give-way. The sailboat under sail is always the stand-on boat!



## U. S. Aids to Navigation System (ATON)

Buoys and markers are the “traffic signals” that guide boat operators safely along some waterways. They also identify dangerous or controlled areas and give directions and information. As a recreational boat operator you will need to know the lateral navigation markers and non-lateral markers of the U. S. Aids to Navigation System.

### Lateral Markers

These navigation aids are used to mark the edges of safe water areas; for example, to direct travel within a channel. They use a combination of colors and numbers which may be applied to buoys or permanently placed markers.



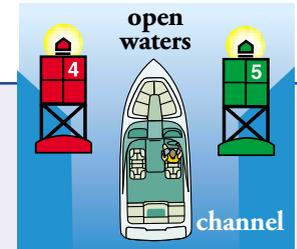
**Red colors, red lights, and even numbers** indicate the right side of the channel as a boater enters from the open sea or heads upstream.



**Green colors, green lights and odd numbers** indicate the left side of the channel as a boater proceeds from the open sea or heads upstream.



**Red and green colors and/or lights** indicate the preferred (primary) channel. If green is on top, the preferred channel is to the right; if red is on top, the preferred channel is to the left.



### Red Right Returning

is a reminder of the correct course when returning from open waters or heading upstream.



**Lighted Buoys** use the lateral marker shapes, colors and numbers discussed above; in addition, they have a matching colored light.



**Nuns** are cone-shaped buoys marked with red colors and even numbers.



**Cans** are cylindrical-shaped buoys marked with green colors and odd numbers.

**Daymarks** are permanently placed signs attached to structures such as posts in the water. Common daymarks are red triangles (equivalent to nuns) and green squares (equivalent to cans) and may also be lighted.



## Intracoastal Waterway

The Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) is a chain of local channels linked together to provide an inland passage along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts. Channels that are part of the ICW are identified by yellow symbols on channel buoys and markers. Buoys and markers that bear these yellow symbols are serving a dual purpose -- they are navigational aids for both the U. S. Aids to Navigation System and the Intracoastal Waterway.



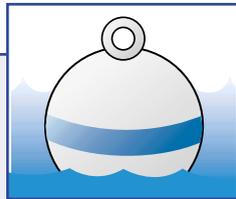
If following the Intracoastal Waterway in a clockwise direction starting from New Jersey and heading to Brownsville, Texas, then:

- ◆ Any marker displaying a yellow triangle should be passed by keeping it on the starboard (right) side of the boat.
- ◆ Any marker displaying a yellow square should be passed by keeping it on the port (left) of the boat.

This is true regardless of the shape or color of the channel marker or buoy on which the ICW symbols are displayed. When you are following the Intracoastal Waterway, the yellow triangles and squares should be used as guides, rather than the colors and shapes of the lateral navigation markers on which they appear.

### Mooring Buoy

Another kind of buoy you may encounter is the mooring buoy. These are white with a blue horizontal band. They are usually placed in marinas and other areas where boats are allowed to anchor.



## Non-Lateral Markers

Non-lateral markers are navigational aids that give information other than the edges of safe water areas. The most common are regulatory markers that are white and use orange markings and black lettering. These markers are found on lakes and rivers.



### Information

These squares indicate where to find food, supplies, repairs, etc., and give directions and other information.



### Controlled

Circles indicate a restricted area such as speed limit, no fishing or anchoring, ski only or no skiing, or slow no wake.



### Exclusion

Crossed diamonds indicate areas off-limits to all boats, such as swimming areas, dams, and spillways.



### Danger

Diamonds warn of dangers such as rocks, shoals, construction, dams, or stumps. Always proceed with caution.

### Other Non-Lateral Markers

**Safe Water Marks** are white with red vertical stripes and mark mid-channels or fairways. They may be passed on either side.



**Inland Waters Obstruction Marks** are white with black vertical stripes and indicate an obstruction to navigation. You should not pass between these buoys and the shore.



## Weather Emergencies

Weather can change very rapidly and create unexpected situations for boat operators. Even meteorologists have trouble predicting rapid weather changes. You should always monitor weather developments. One way is to tune into the frequencies listed below on a VHF radio.

### What to Do If Caught in Foul Weather

- ◆ Put on personal flotation devices (PFDs) and make sure they are properly secured.
- ◆ If there is fog, sound your fog horn. See page 34.
- ◆ Head for the nearest shore that is safe to approach.
- ◆ Head the bow into the waves at a 45 degree angle. PWC should head into the waves at a 90 degree angle.
- ◆ Reduce speed.
- ◆ Seat passengers on the bottom of the boat, as close to the centerline as possible.

### VHF Frequencies Broadcasting NOAA Weather Reports

162.400 MHz	162.500 MHz
162.425 MHz	162.525 MHz
162.450 MHz	162.550 MHz
162.475 MHz	

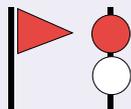
Recreational boaters are given access to these VHF channels:

- 6** ..... Intership safety communications only
- 9** ..... Communications between boats (commercial and recreational), and ship to coast
- 13** ..... Strictly for navigational purposes by vessels at bridges, locks, and harbors
- 16** ..... Distress and safety calls to Coast Guard and others, and to initiate calls to other vessels
- 22** ..... U. S. Coast Guard broadcasts of severe weather warnings and other safety warnings
- 24-28** ..... Public telephone calls (to marine operator)
- 68, 69, 71** ... Recreational boat radio channel and ship to coast

- ◆ Minimize the danger of having your boat struck by lightning by seeking shelter in advance of a storm. If caught on open water during a thunderstorm, stay low in the middle of the boat.
- ◆ Secure loose items. Have emergency gear ready.
- ◆ Keep the bilge free of water.
- ◆ If the engine stops, drop anchor from the bow. If you have no anchor use a “sea anchor”, which is anything (a bucket on a line, a tackle box) that will create drag, and hold the bow into the wind.

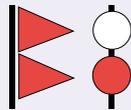
Daytime Flags	Night Time Lights
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### Weather Warning Display Signals



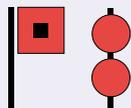
#### Small Craft Advisory

Winds in the range of 21 to 33 knots (24 to 38 mph) which are conditions considered dangerous to small boats.



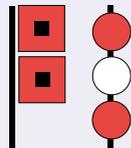
#### Gale Warning

Winds in the range of 34 to 47 knots (39-54 mph).



#### Storm Warning

Winds 48 knots (55 mph) and above. If the winds are associated with a tropical cyclone, this warning forecasts winds of 48-63 knots.



#### Hurricane Warning

Winds of 64 knots (74 mph) and above, displayed in connection with a hurricane.

### National Weather Service Telephone Numbers

For marine weather forecasts and warnings, call:

- (757) 899-4200 Tidewater/Richmond/Chesapeake Bay
- (703) 260-0107 Washington D. C. area

## On the Water Especially for PWC



PWC

Although a PWC is considered an inboard boat and comes under the same rules and requirements of any other boat, there are specific considerations for the PWC operator.

### steering control



steerable nozzle

### Steering and Stopping a PWC

◆ Most PWC have a steering nozzle at the back of the unit. It is controlled by a handle bar or steering wheel that directs the stream of water from right to left. When the steering control is turned right, the steering nozzle is turned right. The force of the water stream leaving the nozzle then pushes the back of the boat to the left, which causes the PWC to turn right.

#### Remember -- no power means no steering control...

You must always have power in order to maintain control. If you allow the engine to return to idle or shut-off during operation, you lose all steering control. The PWC will continue in the direction it was headed before the engine was shut-off, no matter which way the steering control is turned.

- ◆ Always allow plenty of room for stopping. Just because you release the throttle or shut-off the engine does not mean you will stop immediately.

### Ignition Safety Switches

- ◆ All PWC come equipped with an emergency ignition safety switch which is designed to shut the engine down if the operator is thrown from the proper operating position.
- ◆ The ignition safety switch works by attaching a lanyard between the operator and the switch. If the lanyard is removed from the switch, then the engine will shut off.
- ◆ If your PWC does not come equipped with an ignition safety switch, you should have one installed.
- ◆ It is illegal to ride your PWC without attaching the lanyard properly between the switch and yourself.



### Reboarding a Capsized PWC

After a fall a PWC could be completely overturned. When this occurs you should follow these procedures:

- ◆ Most manufacturers have placed a decal at the rear of the craft that indicates the direction to roll your PWC to an upright position. If no decal exists, check your owner's manual or ask the dealer.
- ◆ With this information you should be able to roll the PWC over and reboard from the rear of the craft. If you roll it over the wrong way you could cause serious damage to your PWC.
- ◆ Practice reboarding with someone else around.
- ◆ Avoid riding your PWC when you are very tired, as this can make reboarding more difficult.
- ◆ Avoid riding where there are strong currents or winds; this could hamper your reboarding efforts.

## Courtesy When Encountering Other Boats

- ◆ Jumping the wake of or riding too close to another boat are common complaints boaters have against PWC operators and creates special risks. Visibility around the boat making the wake may be blocked, both for the PWC operator and for oncoming traffic.
- ◆ To keep from creating excessive noise you should:
  - Vary your operating area and don't keep repeating the same maneuver.
  - Avoid congregating with other PWC near shore.
  - Avoid making excessive noise near residential and camping areas, particularly early in the morning.
  - Avoid maneuvers that cause the engine exhaust to lift out of the water as this can cause increased noise levels.
  - Do not modify your engine exhaust system.



## Environmental Considerations

- ◆ Do not operate a PWC in shallow water (less than 24 inches deep). Bottom sediments or aquatic vegetation can be sucked into the water pump and damage your PWC and the environment.
- ◆ Avoid creating a wake which can cause erosion when operating near shore or in narrow streams or rivers.
- ◆ Do not dock or beach your PWC in reeds and grasses. This could damage fragile environments.
- ◆ Take extra care when fueling your PWC in or near the water. Oil and gasoline spills are very detrimental to the aquatic environment. Fuel on land if possible.
- ◆ Never use your PWC to disturb or chase wildlife.

## Before Going Out on Your Boat or PWC



All watercraft operators are required to obey laws that regulate registration, titling, and permits.

## Registering and Titling Your Watercraft

### Certificate of Title

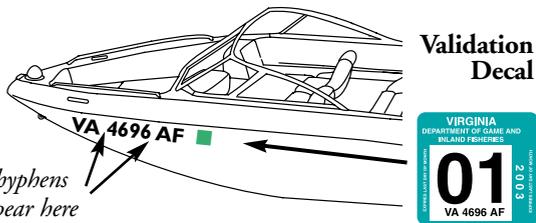
- ◆ Watercraft propelled by a motor (including gasoline, diesel and electric motors) and sail-powered boats over 18 feet in length must be titled.
- ◆ When you buy a watercraft, you must apply for a Certificate of Title and pay the required 2% watercraft sales tax (maximum tax of \$2,000; licensed watercraft dealers excepted).
- ◆ If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Title you must apply to the Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) for a duplicate and submit a processing fee.

### Registration (Certificate of Number)

- ◆ You must have a Virginia Certificate of Number, a “temporary” Certificate of Number or a “Temporary Registration Certificate” to legally operate your watercraft on Virginia waters. The only exceptions are:
  - Non-motorized boats
  - Boats documented with the U. S. Coast Guard
  - Boats properly registered in another state and on Virginia waters for 90 or fewer consecutive days.
- ◆ *This certificate (registration card) must be signed and carried onboard whenever the watercraft is operated.*



- ◆ The Certificate of Number and validation decals are obtained by submitting the proper application form and fee to VDGIF.
- ◆ If the registration of the former owner is valid and the new owner has in his or her possession the dated bill of sale and the valid registration card of the former owner, the new owner may operate the watercraft for 30 days from the date of purchase.
- ◆ If you lose or destroy your Certificate of Number or validation decals you must apply to the VDGIF for a duplicate and submit a processing fee.



Spaces or hyphens should appear here

## Display of Registration Number

- ◆ The registration number and decal must be displayed as:
  - Number must be painted, decaled or otherwise affixed to, and read from left to right both sides of the bow.
  - Number must be in at least 3"-high *block* letters.
  - Number's color must contrast with its background.
  - Letters must be separated from the numbers by a space or hyphen: "VA 4696 AF" or "VA-4696-AF."
  - No other numbers may be displayed.
  - Decals must be affixed to each side of the watercraft within six inches of, and in line with, the registration number. Expired decals must be removed.
- ◆ If your watercraft requires registration, it is illegal to operate or allow others to operate your boat unless it is registered and numbered as described above.

## How to Apply for a Title or Registration

The owner of a watercraft must apply for a Certificate of Title at the same time application is made for for registration (Certificate of Number). (See page 25 for where to obtain forms.) Application for title and registration requires a detailed description of the watercraft that includes make, length, model year, type of watercraft, hull material, type of propulsion, HIN; and if the motor exceeds 25 horsepower, the make, horsepower and serial number of the motor. The following supporting documents must also be submitted with the applications:

- ◆ **New watercraft:** The owner must provide the original Manufacturer's or Importer's Certificate of Origin with "First Assignment" completed and issued by the dealer at the time of purchase and a sales invoice showing gross purchase price, watercraft sales tax paid and a description of the watercraft.
  - If the watercraft sales tax is paid to a dealer, a sales invoice showing gross purchase price and watercraft sales tax paid must be submitted. Credit for tax paid in another state will be given if the owner provides proof of tax paid. (If tax paid is less than 2%, the owner must pay the difference.)
  - If the watercraft was homemade by the owner, an affidavit must be provided stating this fact in lieu of a Manufacturer's or Importer's Certificate of Origin. Copies of receipts for building materials must be submitted with the application
- ◆ **Used watercraft previously titled by another person:** The new owner must submit the *original* Certificate of Title with assignment completed by titled owner(s) and, if purchased from a dealer, a sales invoice showing gross purchase price, watercraft sales tax paid and a description of the watercraft. This is true whether the watercraft was previously titled in Virginia or another state.

- ◆ **Used watercraft previously titled by self in another state:** The owner must submit the *original* Certificate of Title. Sales tax is not required to be paid.
- ◆ **Used watercraft previously registered in Virginia, but not titled:** The owner must submit a dated bill of sale or Notification of Change in Status of a Numbered Vessel form signed by the registered owner(s).
- ◆ **Used watercraft previously registered in another state, but not titled:** The owner must submit a copy of the out-of-state registration and a bill of sale signed by the registered owner(s). If the watercraft was registered in another state by the person applying for title, sales tax will not be required to be paid).
- ◆ **Used watercraft documented with the U. S. Coast Guard:** The owner must submit a Certificate or Documentation and Abstract of Title, with proof of lien release in documented owner's name, and a bill of sale signed by the documented owner(s).

### Other Facts About Titling and Registration

- ◆ A Certificate of Number expires every three years. Renewal notices are mailed to all owners of previously registered watercrafts 60 days before expiration. The registration number assigned to your watercraft remains the same and should never be removed from your watercraft.
- ◆ If you change address, if you sell, abandon or destroy your watercraft, or if your registered watercraft is stolen, you must report this information in writing to the Boat Section, Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries, within 15 days.
- ◆ Watercrafts documented by the U. S. Coast Guard for use on interstate waters cannot be titled or registered.
- ◆ Title, registration and license plates for boat trailers are purchased through the Department of Motor Vehicles.

### Schedule of Fees to Register and Title Your Boat

If the transaction is a...	Then your fee is...
New Title . . . . .	\$.7.00
Duplicate Titles . . . . .	\$.2.00
Change of Motor on Title . . . . .	\$.2.00 *
Record Supplemental Lien on Previously Titled Watercraft . . . . .	\$.2.00 *
3-Year Registration	
Watercraft less than 16 ft. . . . .	\$.18.00
Watercraft 16 ft. to less than 20 ft. . . . .	\$.22.00
Watercraft 20 ft. to less than 40 ft. . . . .	\$.28.00
Watercraft 40 ft. and longer . . . . .	\$.36.00
Livery/Rental Registration	
1 - 10 . . . . .	\$.18.00 each
11 and up . . . . .	\$.12.00 each
Dealer Demonstration Registration . . . . .	\$.25.00
Additional Dealer Registration . . . . .	\$.12.00 each
Manufacturer Demonstration Reg. . . . .	\$.40.00
Additional Manufacturer Reg. . . . .	\$.12.00 each
Temporary Registration Certificate . . . . .	\$.10.50
Duplicate Registration Card . . . . .	\$.05.00
Duplicate Validation Decal . . . . .	\$.1.00 each

\* *Original title must be submitted*

### Where to Title and Register

Mail application forms to:

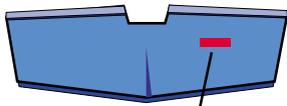
Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
Boat Section  
P. O. Box 11528  
Richmond, VA 23230-1528

Application forms are available from marine dealers, offices of the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), and agents who sell fishing and hunting licenses. Forms may also be downloaded from the Internet at [www.dgif.state.va.us/boating/boating\\_forms.html](http://www.dgif.state.va.us/boating/boating_forms.html)

## Temporary Registration

- ◆ A “Virginia Motorboat Temporary Registration Certificate” is available for purchase to allow owners without a valid Virginia registration to legally operate a motorboat for 30 days from the date of purchase while awaiting their permanent registration and title.
- ◆ If you purchase a temporary certificate, you are not required to display the registration numbers on your watercraft during the 30-day period. However, you must carry the “Temporary Registration Certificate” onboard the watercraft whenever it is in use.
- ◆ When purchasing the “Temporary Registration Certificate,” you must show proof of ownership, such as:
  - Watercraft Registration issued in owner’s name; or issued in previous owner’s name accompanied by a bill of sale (receipt) or “Change In Status” form signed by the previous owner
  - Title to a Vessel issued in owner’s name; or issued in previous owner’s name and signed over to purchaser
  - Bill of Sale (receipt) signed by seller that includes a description of the watercraft.
- ◆ For more information on temporary registration, call 1-877-898-BOAT (1-877-898-2628).

## Hull Identification Number



ABC 67689 B8 99

All boats manufactured for sale must have a manufacturer’s serial number or Hull Identification Number (HIN).

It is unique to your boat. HINs

are typically engraved in the fiberglass or on a small metal plate attached to the transom. Record and save your HIN number away from the boat. It can be useful if warranty problems arise or if your boat is lost or stolen.

## Marine Events

If an event is being held on Virginia waters and a patrol presence is desired, contact the Law Enforcement Division of the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries at (804) 367-0776 prior to the event. Permits may be required by the federal, county or municipal body who has jurisdiction over the waters.

## Who May Operate a Boat or PWC

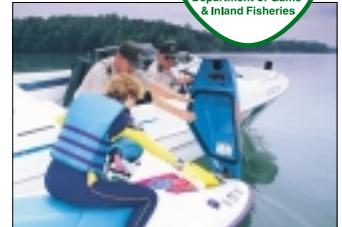
- ◆ There is no minimum age or education requirements for operation of boats other than personal watercraft.
- ◆ Those 13 years of age and younger may not operate a personal watercraft under any conditions.
- ◆ Those 14 and 15 years old may operate a PWC only if they have passed a boating safety course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). These operators must carry their proof of course completion onboard whenever they operate a PWC.
- ◆ Those 16 years of age and older may operate a PWC without age restrictions.



## Enforcement

The boating laws of Virginia are primarily enforced by Game Wardens employed by the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries.

These officers have full police powers and have the right to lawfully stop and board your boat at any time to check for compliance with federal and state laws. The U. S. Coast Guard also has enforcement authority on federally controlled waters. Treat the officers courteously because proper enforcement of regulations makes the water safer for everyone.



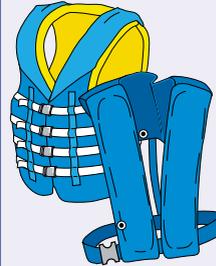
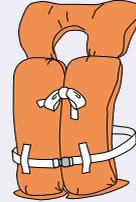
# Required Equipment for Your Boat or PWC



When preparing to go out on a boat or PWC the operator must check that the legally required equipment is onboard.

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- ◆ All boats must have at least one Type I, II, III or V personal flotation device that is U. S. Coast Guard-approved, and of the proper size for each person onboard or being towed. Sizing for PFDs is based on body weight and chest size.
- ◆ All PFDs must be in good and serviceable condition and must be readily accessible.
- ◆ In addition to the above requirements, boats 16 ft. in length or longer must have one Type IV U. S. Coast Guard-approved PFD onboard and readily accessible.
- ◆ Each person riding on a PWC must *wear* a U. S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device.
- ◆ Each person being towed behind a boat or PWC must *wear* a U. S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device if no observer is onboard.



### TYPE I: Offshore Life Jacket

These vests are geared for rough or remote waters where rescue may take awhile. They are excellent for flotation and will turn most unconscious persons face up in the water.

### TYPE II: Near-Shore Vest

These vests are good for calm waters and fast rescues. Type II vests may lack the capacity to turn unconscious wearers face up.

### TYPE III: Flotation Aid

These vests or full-sleeved jackets are good for calm waters and fast rescues. They are not for rough waters since they will not turn a person face up.

### TYPE IV: Throwable Device

These cushions or ring buoys are designed to be thrown to someone in trouble. They are not for long hours in rough waters, non-swimmers or the unconscious.

### TYPE V: Special Use Device

These windsurfing vests, deck suits, hybrid PFDs and others are designed for specific activities, such as kayaking or water skiing. *To be acceptable, Type V PFDs must be used in accordance with their label.*

## Navigation Lights

The required navigation lights differ depending on the type and size of your boat.

### Power-Driven Boats When Underway

**If less than 65.6 ft.** (20 meters) long, these boats must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 1. Remember, power-driven boats include sailboats operating under power. The required lights are:

- ◆ Red and green sidelights visible from at least two miles (or if less than 39.4 ft. long, at least one mile)
- ◆ An all-round white light or both a masthead light and a sternlight. These lights must be visible from at least two miles on a dark clear night. The all-round white light (or the masthead light) must be at least 3.3 ft. (1 meter) higher than the sidelights.

### Manually-Driven Boats When Underway

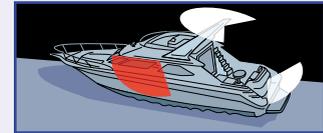
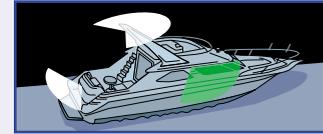
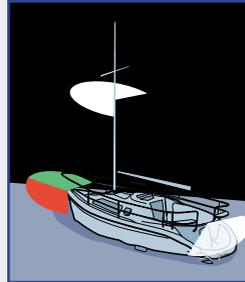
Manually-driven boats are sailboats or those that are paddled, poled and rowed.

- ◆ **If less than 65.6 ft.** (20 meters) long, these boats must exhibit the lights as shown in illustration 2. The required lights are:
  - Red and green sidelights visible from at least two miles (or if less than 39.4 ft. long, at least one mile)
  - A sternlight visible from at least two miles.
- ◆ **If less than 23.0 ft.** (7 meters) long, these boats should:
  - If practical, exhibit the same lights as required for manually-driven boats listed above
  - If not practical, they must have on hand at least one lantern or flashlight shining a white light as shown in illustration 3.

### All Boats When Not Underway

- ◆ **All boats** are required to use an all-round white light whenever they are moored, anchored or adrift away from dock between sunset and sunrise.

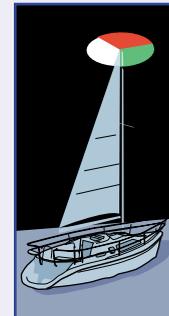
### 1. Power-Driven Boats Less Than 65.6 Ft.



*Combination red and green lights allowed only on boats less than 39.4 ft.*

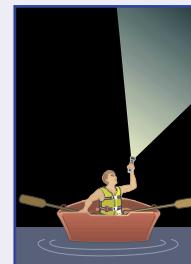


### 2. Manually-Driven Boats Less Than 65.6 Ft.



*An alternative to the sidelights and sternlight is a combination red, green and white light which must be exhibited near the top of the mast.*

### 3. Manually-Driven Boats Less Than 23.0 Ft.



*Boat operators should never leave shore without a flashlight. Even if you plan to return before dark, unforeseen developments like engine trouble might delay your return past nightfall.*

## Fire Extinguishers

- ◆ All boats are required to have a Type B, U. S. Coast Guard-approved fire extinguisher(s) onboard if one or more of the following conditions exist:
  - Powered by an inboard or stern drive gasoline engine
  - Length of the boat is 26 feet or more
  - Closed compartments under seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored
  - Double-bottoms not sealed to the hull or which are not completely filled with flotation material
  - Closed living spaces
  - Closed storage compartments in which flammable or combustible materials may be stored
  - Permanently installed fuel tanks.
- ◆ Approved types of fire extinguishers are identified by the following marking on the label “Marine Type USCG Approved”, followed by the size and type symbols and the approval number.
- ◆ Extinguishers must be mounted in an accessible area. Check extinguishers annually to make sure they are charged and be sure you know how to operate them.

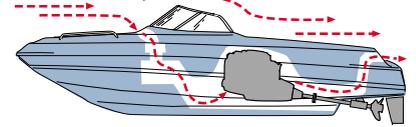
Use this chart to determine the type and quantity required:

Fire Extinguisher Requirements			
Classification type & size	Foam minimum gallons	Carbon minimum pounds	Dry Chemical minimum pounds
B-I	1 1/4	4	2
B-II	2 1/2	15	10
Length Class	Without Fixed System	Without Fixed System	With Fixed System*
Less than 16 ft.	1 B-I	1 B-I	None
16 ft. to less than 26 ft.	1 B-I	1 B-I	None
26 ft. to less than 40 ft.	2 B-I or 1 B-II	2 B-I or 1 B-II	1 B-I
40 ft. to less than 65 ft.	3 B-I or 1 B-II and 1 B-I	3 B-I or 1 B-II and 1 B-I	2 B-I or 1 B-II

*\* refers to a permanently installed fire extinguisher system*

## Ventilation Systems

The importance of ventilation is crucial. The purpose of ventilation systems is to avoid explosions by removing flammable gases. Properly installed ventilation systems greatly reduce the chance of a life-threatening explosion.



- ◆ All gas-powered boats, constructed in a way that would entrap fumes, must have at least two ventilation ducts fitted with cowls to remove the fumes.
- ◆ All boats built after July 31, 1980 must have a power exhaust blower mounted in the engine compartment which forces dangerous gasoline fumes from the space. The open end of the intake duct mounted on the exhaust blower must be in the lower one-third of the compartment and above the normal level of accumulated bilge water.
- ◆ If your boat is equipped with a power ventilation system, turn it on for at least four minutes after fueling, prior to starting your engine.

## Flame Arrestors

- ◆ Because boat engines may backfire, all powerboats, (except outboards) fueled with gasoline, must have a U. S. Coast Guard-approved backfire flame arrestor on each carburetor.
- ◆ Regularly clean the flame arrestor and check for damage.

## Mufflers

- ◆ All boat engines must be equipped with an effective, permanently installed muffling system and be used to muffle the noise of the exhaust in a reasonable manner.
- ◆ The use of cut-outs is prohibited.

## Sound Producing Devices

- ◆ Boats less than 39.4 ft. (12 meters) in length, *which includes PWC*, are required to carry a whistle or horn or some other means to make an efficient sound signal to announce intentions or positions.
- ◆ Boats 39.4 ft. (12 meters) or more in length are required to carry onboard a whistle or horn, *and* a bell.

Some common sound signals that you should be familiar with as a recreational boater are:

### Restricted Visibility

- One prolonged blast every two minutes is the signal used by powerboats when underway.
- One prolonged plus two short blasts every two minutes is the signal used by sailboats under sail alone.

### Warning

- One prolonged blast is a warning signal (for example, when coming around a blind bend or exiting a slip).
- Five short blasts is used to signal danger or to signal that you do not understand or disagree with the other boater's intentions.

## Visual Distress Signals (VDSs)

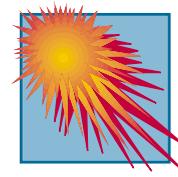
- ◆ Boats used on federally controlled waters (like Chesapeake Bay, the Potomac River and the Atlantic Ocean) must be equipped with USCG-approved VDSs.
- ◆ If pyrotechnic VDSs are used, a minimum of three must be carried in the boat.
- ◆ All boats are required to carry night signals when operating between sunset and sunrise.
- ◆ The following boats must also carry day signals:
  - Recreational boats 16 feet or longer
  - Non-motorized, open sailboats 26 feet or longer
  - Boats for hire carrying up to six passengers.

- ◆ All VDSs must be in serviceable condition, readily accessible, and certified as complying with USCG requirements.



### Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals

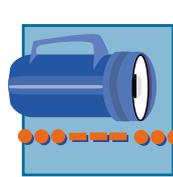
**Orange Smoke**  
*Day Signal*



**Red Meteor**  
*Day and Night Signal*



**Red Flare**  
*Day and Night Signal*



### Non-Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals

**Electric Light**  
*Night Signal*



**Orange Flag**  
*Day Signal*



### Arm Signal

*Although not a U. S. Coast Guard-approved VDS, use this arm action to indicate you need help if you do not have other visual distress signals available.*

### Federally Controlled Waters

Boats must observe federal requirements when operating on:

- Coastal waters
- The Great Lakes
- Territorial seas
- Waters which are two miles wide or wider and are directly connected to one of the above.

## On the Water With Your Boat or PWC



In addition to the laws mentioned previously, here are some other Virginia regulations which apply when boat and PWC operators are on the water.

### Unlawful Operation of a Boat or PWC

Reckless operation of a boat or PWC is defined as the failure to exercise the care necessary to prevent the endangerment of life, limb, or property of any other person. Some examples of illegal and reckless operation are:

- ◆ Operating in a reckless manner such as jumping wakes or weaving in and out of waterway traffic.
- ◆ Failing to obey any regulatory marker. For example, it is illegal to boat in restricted areas, such as swimming areas, that have been marked by buoys or in some other way.
- ◆ Operating at speeds that are not reasonable and prudent based on boating traffic, weather conditions, visibility or other potential hazards. If no limits are posted you should operate a boat so that it does not endanger others. Boat speed should always be maintained so that the boat can be stopped safely.
- ◆ Allowing passengers to ride on the bow, gunwale, transom, seat backs, seats on raised decks, or any other place where there may be a chance of falling overboard.
- ◆ Operating any boat at greater than no wake or idle speed when within 50 feet of:
  - Docks, piers, boathouses or boat ramps
  - Persons in the water (note this does not apply to your towed skier).
- ◆ Loading your boat beyond the recommended capacity shown on the capacity plate installed by the boat manufacturer.

- ◆ Causing damage to a person or property with your boat's wake. You must reduce speed so as not to cause damage or danger when approaching or passing:
  - Boats underway or boats at anchor
  - Docks, piers, or boathouses
  - Persons in the water
  - Persons using water skis, surfboards or similar devices.
- ◆ Chasing, harassing or disturbing marine mammals or birds with your boat or PWC.

#### **“Idle Speed” or “Slow - No Wake Speed”**

When you see these buoys or signs you must reduce speed to slowest possible speed necessary to maintain steerage and headway.

### Proper Navigation

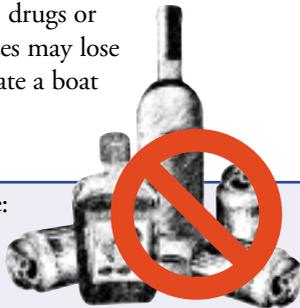
- ◆ It is illegal to obstruct navigation by:
  - Moor or attach a boat to a buoy, beacon, light, or any other navigational aid placed on public waters by proper authorities. Also, it is illegal to move, displace, tamper with, damage, or destroy any navigational aid.
  - Interfere with the passage of large, deep-draft vessels which can safely navigate only inside such channels.
- ◆ Boat operators must operate in a manner that allows all vessels to navigate safely:
  - In narrow channels every motorboat must, if safe and practical, keep to that side of the fairway or mid-channel which lies on the starboard side of the motorboat.
  - Where a motorboat operator's vision is obscured by bridges or other obstructions ahead, or by sharp bends in a narrow waterway, or by fog and weather conditions, the motorboat must be operated at reduced speed such that the vessel can be stopped within the distance the operator or a lookout is able to see ahead.

## Alcohol and Drugs

- ◆ Virginia law states that a person is considered to be “under the influence” if:
  - He or she is 21 years of age or older and has a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08% or higher, or is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs to a degree which impairs his or her ability to operate safely.
  - He or she is under 21 years of age and has any measurable blood alcohol concentration (0.02% or higher), or is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs to a degree which impairs his or her ability to operate safely.
- ◆ Virginia law establishes the following penalties:
  - Those convicted of operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs will:
    - Receive a fine of up to \$2,500
    - Be imprisoned for up to 12 months
    - Lose the privilege to operate a boat for up to three years
    - Be required to attend an Alcohol Safety Action Program.
  - By operating a boat or PWC on Virginia waters, you have consented to be tested for the presence of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances if requested by a peace officer. Any person refusing to submit to testing for the presence of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances may lose his or her privilege to operate a boat for up to 24 months.

Just remember this simple rule:

**Don't drink and boat!**



## Accidents and Casualties

- ◆ An operator involved in a boating accident must stop their boat immediately at the scene of the accident and:
  - Aid anyone injured in the accident, unless doing so would endanger their own boat or passengers
  - Give, in writing, his or her name, address and boat identification to the other boat's operator and/or owner of damaged property.
- ◆ The operator or owner of a boat involved in an accident must promptly notify a State Game Warden or marine patrol officer if:
  - A person is injured requiring medical treatment beyond first aid *or* ...
  - Damage to the boat and other property exceeds \$500.
- ◆ ***If a person dies or disappears*** as a result of an accident, the boat operator must notify the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) without delay by calling (804) 367-1258, or notify the most immediately available Game Warden.
- ◆ In addition, a written report of a boating accident must be made. Written reports of accidents involving only property damage must be made within 10 days of the accident. However, you must file an accident report within 48 hours in cases involving a death, disappearance or injury requiring medical treatment beyond first aid.
- ◆ Boating accident report forms can be from any office of the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries or obtained online at:  
[www.dgif.state.va.us/boating/boating\\_forms.html](http://www.dgif.state.va.us/boating/boating_forms.html).

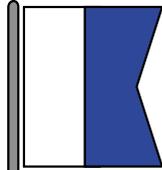
## Diver Down Flags

- ◆ Scuba divers or snorkelers must display a “Diver Down” flag to mark their diving area.
- ◆ Boats must maintain a distance of at least 25 yards from any displayed “diver down” flag.



### Divers Flag

*A rectangular red flag, at least 12 inches by 12 inches, with a white diagonal stripe if on Virginia state waters.*



### Alpha Flag

*A blue and white International Code Flag A (or Alpha flag) if on federally controlled or international waters.*

## Discharge of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances

- ◆ It is illegal to discharge oil or hazardous substances.
- ◆ You are not allowed to dump oil into the bilge of the boat without means for proper disposal.
- ◆ You must discharge oil waste to a reception facility. On recreational boats, a bucket or bailer is adequate.
- ◆ If your boat is 26 feet or longer you must display a 5 by 8 inch placard near the bilge pump switch stating the Federal Water Pollution Control Act's law.

If your boat discharges oil or hazardous substances in the water:

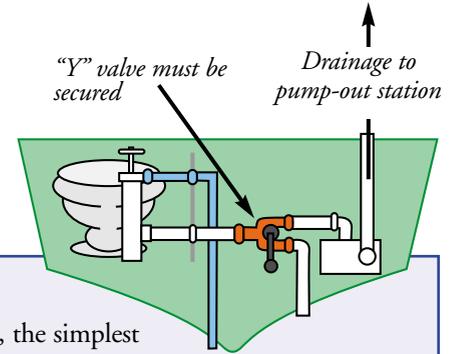
- ◆ Immediately call the U. S. Coast Guard at 1-800-424-8802.
- ◆ Also call the Virginia Department of Health at 1-804-786-1761.



## Discharge of Waste

- ◆ State law prohibits boats from discharging any sewage, treated or untreated, into fresh waters of Virginia.
- ◆ If you have a recreational boat with installed toilet facilities, it must have an operable marine sanitation device (MSD) onboard. All installed devices must be U. S. Coast Guard-certified.

### Typical Marine Sanitation Device



### Types of MSDs

- ◆ Type III MSD, the simplest and most common, consists of holding tanks or portable toilets. Waste is to be discharged on shore into a pump-out facility.
- ◆ Types I and II MSDs are usually found on large boats. Waste is treated with special chemicals to kill bacteria. The “Y”-valve must be secured so that waste cannot be discharged into the water.

## Discharge of Trash

It is illegal to dump garbage and plastics into federally controlled and state waters.

- ◆ You should store trash in a container onboard, and place it in a proper receptacle after returning to shore.
- ◆ You must display a 4 by 9 inch placard (sign) on any boat 26 feet or longer. It must notify passengers and crew about pollution restrictions.

## Protecting the Environment

While on Virginia waters, boat and PWC operators need to take care to preserve and protect the water environment.

### Protect Marine Life

- ◆ **Migratory birds** are present near water-bodies in Virginia year-round -- feeding and resting from migration in winter and breeding, nesting and feeding in summer.
  - Persistent noise, movement of vessels and wakes can disturb birds.
  - Adult birds disturbed from the nest may not return immediately. Chicks and eggs left unattended in nests can overheat or be taken by predators. Many birds nest in vegetation at the shoreline. They are easily scared off of nests by the noise, movement and wakes of boats.
  - Migrating birds must stop to rest and feed during migration. Constant interruption by boats uses much needed energy and may reduce a bird's ability to successfully complete its journey.
- ◆ **Sea turtles** are large marine turtles that only come ashore to nest. In Virginia sea turtles are found throughout Chesapeake Bay, in the ocean and river mouths. Nesting occurs on the beaches of southeastern Virginia. Sea turtles are vulnerable to strikes by boats when they come to the surface to breathe. Turtle's shells can be damaged by the propellers of boats. If hit by the hull of a boat, turtles can sustain impact injuries.



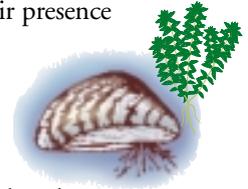
- ◆ **Bottlenose dolphins** are found in coastal ocean and Chesapeake Bay waters. They may be seen occasionally in river mouths as well. Other types of dolphins and porpoises are seen primarily in ocean waters.

- While vessels rarely hit bottlenose dolphins, strikes can occur, especially in shallow water.
- Boats easily disturb dolphins. Mothers and calves are especially vulnerable to separation by boats that chase, circle and/or separate groups. Stay at least 50 ft. away from dolphin groups.
- Constant presence of boats interrupts feeding, mating and nursing activities.

- ◆ **Whales, manatees and seals** also occur in Virginia waters. While these animals are not common in Virginia, boat operators should be aware of their presence and avoid disturbing them.

### Stop the Spread of Nuisance Species

Aquatic nuisance species such as zebra mussels and hydrilla spread between waterways by hitching a ride on boats and trailers. When moved into new waters, they multiply, displacing native species and damaging the water resource. Before leaving a waterbody, inspect your boat and trailer and remove any plants and animals you see; and drain your motor, live well, and bilge on land. Never release live bait into a waterbody or releasing aquatic animals from one waterbody into another. Rinse and completely air-dry your boat's hull, propeller, trailer and equipment.



### Preserve Submersed Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)

Submersed aquatic vegetation (or SAV) are underwater grasses often found in shallow (less than 6 ft.) areas. They are habitat for fish and shellfish and a food source for several waterfowl species. SAV add oxygen to the water and reduce wave energy, protecting shoreline and bottoms. Scientific studies have shown that SAV beds can be scarred by propellers or by boats that run aground. Recovery from this scarring can take years. When operating your boat in shallow areas, be careful to avoid damaging SAV.

PWC operators must adhere to additional legal requirements that apply specifically to the operation of personal watercraft on Virginia waters.

## Requirements Specific to PWC

- ◆ Each person riding on a PWC must wear a U. S. Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III or V PFD.
- ◆ It is illegal to operate PWC between sunset and sunrise.
- ◆ If the PWC is equipped with an ignition safety switch, the lanyard must be attached to the person, clothing or PFD of the operator.
- ◆ You may not carry more passengers on a PWC than the PWC was designed to carry by the manufacturer.
- ◆ When operating a PWC, you must reduce speed to no wake or idle speed when within 50 feet of:
  - Docks, piers, boathouses or boat ramps
  - Persons in the water (note this does not include persons towed behind the PWC)
  - Another boat other than a PWC.
- ◆ PWC must be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner at all times. It is illegal to:
  - Weave through waterway traffic or anchored boats.
  - Steer toward another object or person in the water and turn sharply to spray or attempt to spray with water.
  - Follow closely behind another boat, PWC or skier.
  - Jump the wake of another boat or PWC, or cross the path of another boat or PWC, more closely than is reasonable and prudent.
  - Cut between a boat or PWC and the person(s) being towed by that boat or PWC.
  - Chase, harass or disturb marine mammals or birds .

## Sharing Your PWC ... Safely!

Sharing the fun of your PWC with your friends and family is all part of the boating experience. However, you should always make sure that anyone operating your PWC understands their responsibilities as a driver of a PWC. Let them know that they are operating a boat and have the same responsibilities as any other boat operator. Before allowing anyone to operate your PWC:

- ◆ Make sure they meet the minimum age and education requirements for PWC operation.
- ◆ Make sure they know basic boating safety information and “rules of the road.”
- ◆ Let beginners take their first rides in an area where there are few boats and swimmers. While still on shore, show them the proper procedures for deep water starting and reboarding.
- ◆ Explain the basic operating features of the PWC. Be sure to give instruction on how to steer and control the PWC. Remind the operator that power is required for steering control!
- ◆ Make sure the operator understands how to use the lanyard with the ignition safety switch.
- ◆ Explain the importance of obeying “slow-no-wake” restrictions.
- ◆ Emphasize the need for staying alert. Beginning riders may concentrate on riding and not on paying attention to the surrounding traffic in the area.



## Especially for Skiers and Those Towing Them



Boat and PWC operators towing a person(s) on water skis, aquaplane or other similar device have additional laws they must follow.

### Requirements for Towing Skiers

- ◆ You may tow a water skier only between the hours of one half-hour before sunrise and one half-hour after sunset. PWC are restricted to sunrise to sunset.



- ◆ A boat or PWC towing a person(s) on water skis or similar device must have one of the following:
  - A person, in addition to the boat operator, onboard and observing the towed person(s) *or...*
  - Person(s) being towed are wearing a U. S. Coast Guard-approved PFD. Ski belts and inflatable PFDs are not approved.
- ◆ The operator of the towing vessel and the skier must not operate in a manner which endangers the safety of persons or property. It is illegal to cause the person being towed to collide with any object or person.

### Hand Signals for Skiers

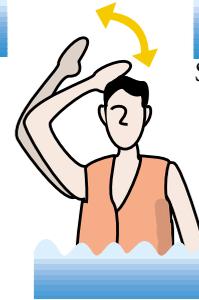
Knowing proper hand signals will help the skier(s) communicate with their boat operator or the observer.



Skier OK



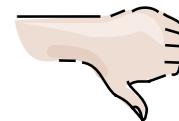
Skier down-watch!



Back to dock



Speed up



Slow down



Speed OK



Turn left



Turn right



Stop

# Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries Information

## REGIONAL & HEADQUARTER OFFICES

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

Boaters who need to communicate with a Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Game Warden should **call the nearest regional office**. Office hours are 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. On Saturdays and Sundays, please call the Law Enforcement Dispatcher in Richmond at **1-804-367-1258** for assistance.

### HEADQUARTERS

4010 W. Broad St.  
P. O. Box 11528  
Richmond, VA 23230  
Boat Section  
(877) 898-2628

### REGION 3 SOUTHWEST

**Marion Office**  
1796 Highway Sixteen  
Marion, VA 24354  
(540) 783-4860

### REGION 4 NORTHWEST

**Verona Office**  
4725 Lee Highway  
Verona, VA 24482  
(540) 248-9360, 9361

### REGION 5 NORTH CENTRAL

**Fredericksburg Office**  
1320 Belman Road  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
(540) 899-4169

### REGION 1 EASTERN REGION

**Williamsburg Office**  
5806 Mooretown Road  
Williamsburg, VA 23188  
(757) 253-7072

### REGION 2 SOUTH CENTRAL

**Forest Office**  
1132 Thomas Jefferson Road  
Forest, VA 24551-9223  
(804) 525-7522



## Required Equipment Checklist

	PWC	Boat Less Than 16 Ft.	Boat 16 Ft. To Less Than 26 Ft.
Boater Education Certificate	✓ <sup>1</sup>		
Certificate of Number Onboard	✓	✓	✓
Validation Decal Displayed	✓	✓	✓
PFDs: Type I, II, III, or V	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓	✓
PFD: Type IV			✓
Type B-I Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓
Ignition Safety Switch	✓		
Flame Arrestor	✓	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler	✓	✓	✓
Horn, Whistle or Bell	✓	✓	✓
Daytime Visual Distress System			✓ <sup>4</sup>
Night Time Visual Distress System	5	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>
Navigation Lights	5	✓	✓

1. Applicable if operator is a minor. See page 26 for details.
2. Those on PWC must wear a PFD at all times.
3. Required on gasoline engines only.
4. Required only if operating on federally controlled waters.
5. Certain items are not applicable to PWC because they are not allowed to operate between sunset and sunrise.

# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME & INLAND FISHERIES

## BOATING

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## FISHING



## HUNTING



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## WILDLIFE



Find out about...

- boat registration and titling
- fishing licenses
- locate boating access areas
- accessing the Fishing Law Digest
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